

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 36, and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,540,693 to Wise. The Examiner has also rejected claims 22, 24, 37, and 38 as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,513,876 to Tarbox. The Examiner has also rejected claims 22, 30, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,563,256 to Graham. The Examiner has also made a number of rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) by citing various combinations of prior art. In particular, the Examiner has rejected claim 27 as being unpatentable over Wise while noting the use of the self-tapping thread is an obvious matter of design choice. The Examiner has rejected claim 35 as being unpatentable over Wise in view of United States Patent No. 6,039,358 to Stoll et al. while noting that Stoll discloses using bolts which are concealed. The Examiner has also rejected claim 41 as being unpatentable over Wise in view of United States Patent No. 6,206,028 to Holden et al. while noting that Holden discloses using various connection means for cooperating with different conduits or connectors. The Examiner has rejected claim 39 as being unpatentable over Tarbox while noting that the Tarbox suggests a dummy or blank plate.

The Examiner has also indicated that Claims 32 through 34 define allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that the application contains allowable subject matter.

In response to the Office Action, Applicants have rewritten the subject matter in a more traditional United States format and now positively claim both the "retaining means" and the "attachment means" as defined in new claims 42-64. Claims 32 through 34 have been rewritten in independent form as new Claims 52 through 54 and 64 respectively to place the subject matter defined by Claims 32 through 34 in condition for allowance

The present invention is a valve including a valve housing 5, a first connection board 22, a second connection board 23, a retaining means 36, and an attachment means 37. The valve housing 5 has a first interface 18, a second interface 19, and is formed with a plurality of housing ducts (8, 8'). The first interface 18 is on a first side 16 and the second interface 19 is on a second side 17 which is opposite the first side 16. The first connection board 22 has a first connection duct 32a that communicates with one of the plurality of housing ducts 8, and is mounted to the first interface 18. The second connection board 23 has a second connection duct 32b that communicates with one of the plurality of housing ducts 8, and is mounted to the second interface 19. The retaining means 36 anchors the first connection board 22 to the valve housing 5 and the attachment means 37 secures the first connection board 22 to the valve housing 5. The attachment means 37 is arranged at a distance from the retaining means 36 and passes through the valve housing 5 at the second connection board 23.

1. Subject matter previously deemed Allowable by the Examiner

In the Office action, the Examiner indicated that Claims 32 through 34 define allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In rewriting the claims in a more traditional U.S. format, Applicants have rewritten Claims 32 through 34 in independent form as new Claims 52 through 54 and 64 respectively to place these claims in condition for allowance.

2. Prior Art Rejections

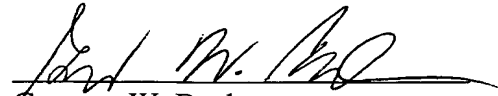
In the Office Action, the Examiner cites to various prior art references contending that the references disclose or suggest, in part, the retaining means 36 or the attachment means 37. As noted above, the present invention as defined by the Claims 42 through 64 are defined by at least the combination of the retaining means 36 and the attachment means 37. Since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest this combination, Applicants submit that Claims 42 through 64 patentably define over the prior art references of record.

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Amendment dated: April 15, 2004

Response to Office Action dated January 15, 2004

If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will assist in moving the application towards allowance, he is respectfully invited to contact Applicants' attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregory W. Bachmann
Registration No.: 41,593
Attorney for Applicant

HOFFMANN & BARON, LLP
6900 Jericho Turnpike
Syosset, New York 11791
(516) 822-3550
GWB/nr/cb

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